Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Three in four Australians in the labour force last year

Seventy-seven percent of Australians aged 15 to 69 years either worked or looked for work at some time during the year ending February 1999, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Findings show that 85% of males participated in the labour force (i.e. either worked or looked for work) during the period. For females the participation rate over the year was 69%. While the male rate has remained stable for a number of years, the rate for females has steadily increased from 65% in 1989.

A total of 9.4 million persons worked at some time during the year. Of these, 56% were male and 44% were female.

Other findings include:

- After declines in the early 1990s, the number of people who worked during the year has increased from 8.9 million in February 1995 to 9.4 million in February 1999. Over this period, the number of people working all of the year increased at a greater rate than the number of people working for part of the year only (8.1% compared to 0.9%).
- Seventy-one percent of males who worked did so for the entire year, compared to 61% of females.
- There were 973,800 males and 803,700 females who looked for work at some time during the year ending February 1999.
- Over half the people looking for work were aged between 15-34 years (61% for males and 64% for females).
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of people looking for work during the year had also worked during the year, down from 65% in 1997.

There were 3.0 million people who were never in the labour force during the year. The most commonly reported main activities while not in the labour force for males were 'attended an educational institution' (27%), 'holiday, travel, or leisure activities' (26%), and 'retired or voluntarily inactive' (22%). For females, the most commonly reported main activities were 'home duties, or childcare' (55%) and 'attended an educational institution' (16%).

Copies of the publication **Labour Force Experience, Australia, February 1999** (cat. no. 6206.0) are available from ABS Bookshops. A summary of the publication is available on this site. The

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